UNITY

FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER IN RELIGION

The Church As a Cooperative Ministry - - - - - - - - - - *Angus MacLean*

What Can We Do About Population Pressure? - - - - - *Edith Hansen*

A Unitarian Thrust for Our Times - - - - - - - - - - - *Robert H. Schact*

Through a Layman's Eyes - *Willard A. Smith*

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CURTIS W. REESE, *Editor*

CONTRIBUTORS

Edith Hansen: Homemaker.

Angus MacLean: Dean of The Theological School, St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York.

Robert H. Schact: Minister of the First Unitarian Church of Providence, Rhode Island.

Willard A. Smith: Professor of European History, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.

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THE FIELD

"The world is my country, to do good is my Religion"

The Contagion of Freedom

The yearning of people for freedom is highly contagious and does not take distances into account. From Central Europe sparks have flown into Spain, there to ignite again a fire which had never completely died down. A manifesto is being circulated around Madrid, announcing the formation of a new political party—the *Democratic Social Action Party*—to defy the totalitarian oneness of Franco's Falange.

The document, supposedly, is being circulated in secrecy. How long will it be before Franco's militia seizes those who wrote it and those who are passing it along? Or will it be proved also in Spain, as it has so often before in history, that there can be "secrecy" when the vast crowd involved in it is committed, heart and mind, to its fateful importance? Most revolutions start with secret plans, secret orders and arrangements, which include hundreds of individuals, many of whom have preferred death to the yielding of a word.

The manifesto partakes of the spirit which pushed first the Poles and then the Hungarians into their rebellions. The new party demands that there shall be: equal rights for all Spaniards; open discussion by all political forces in Spain as to how to best "liquidate the Franco regime" and take first steps toward restoration of freedom; a democratic government after elections for a new Parliament; a national referendum to decide between restoration of the monarchy or some other form of government; immediate reestablishment of such basic freedoms as freedom of association, of expression, of action, and of residence, and complete religious liberty; clear-cut separation of the executive and legislative powers in Government.

The preamble to these principles and demands declares that "the majority of the Spanish people are prisoners of a vicious circle: when they recall their recent past they are overcome by disgrace, and when they consider their present state they are overwhelmed by shame and humiliation. Franco's dictatorship has neither solved problems nor created harmony in the land. . . ."

—*World Around Press.*

UNITY

VOLUME CXLII JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1957 No. 5

EDITORIAL

I want this, my last editorial for UNITY, to contain a brief summary of my doings in the Greater Chicago Area. When I came to Chicago in August of 1919, as Secretary of the Western Unitarian Conference, there were only two Unitarian ministers presiding over Unitarian churches in the Greater Chicago Area: William H. Pulsford at the First Unitarian Church, with 27 voting members; and Fred V. Hawley at Unity Church on the near North Side, with approximately the same number of voting members. It was a dreary and gloomy outlook that I confronted. The headquarters at 105 S. Dearborn Street had dilapidated furniture and was lighted by gas. My first move was to ask the Alliance Branches of the Western Unitarian Conference to make special contributions for the purpose of rehabilitating the headquarters of the Conference. The Alliance Branches—bless their hearts—responded quickly and generously, and the office was thoroughly modernized and equipped with efficient machinery.

Before proceeding further with details of my activities in the Greater Chicago Area, I want to make it perfectly plain that I do not claim credit for all the developments that have occurred in Unitarianism in the Greater Chicago Area from 1919 to 1957. What I do claim, however, is to have created the prior conditions and the atmosphere which have made possible these developments.

There were, as I have already said, two ministers presiding over Unitarian Churches in the Greater Chicago Area in 1919. There are now twelve Unitarian ministers presiding over Unitarian Churches in the Greater Chicago Area.

After the rehabilitation of the headquarters of the Conference, my next task in the Greater Chicago Area was the reestablishment of the Third Unitarian Church, which had closed and sold its property. I got together the names of all the Unitarians that I could who lived on the West Side, wrote letters to them and invited them to a meeting at the home of Mrs. Mason on West Washington Street. After holding several meetings in the Mason home, one Sunday we assembled as West Side Unitarians and passed a vote, asking the Third Unitarian Church to consolidate with us. We then adjourned as West Side Unitarians and reassembled as Third Church Unitarians, and voted to accept our own invitation as West Side Unitarians to consolidate. Thus the Third Church was rescued, together with the funds from the sale of its building, and arrangements were made to move further west into the Austin area, where A. Wakefield Slaten became minister. Slaten was followed by David Rhys Williams. Williams was followed by Walton Cole. Cole was followed by Edwin Wilson, under whose pastorate a beautiful little church was erected. Wilson was succeeded by the present minister, Edwin T. Buehrer, who has just dedicated an enlarged building. The Third Church is now one of the most active and one of the most stable churches in the Greater Chicago Area.

I am not sure of the chronology from this point on but certainly one of the next projects was the rehabilitation of the Hinsdale Church, which had not had a minister for some five or six years—that is, not since its last minister, who had gone to another church, was arrested on Sunday evening following his second service of the day, charged with having three wives at the same time, and was later sentenced to three years in Leavenworth. For the job of rebuilding Hinsdale, I chose a woman minister from Iowa, namely Cora Van Velsor Lambert. Mrs. Lambert was the last in a long line of highly successful women ministers in the state of Iowa. From the beginning of Mrs. Lambert's pastorate the church began to pick up and has continued to prosper, until today under Sunder Joshi it is active, growing, and vigorous.

I placed Hugh Robert Orr in Evanston, under whose pastorate the parish house was erected, and under whom the church grew and flourished. The Evanston Church continued under Raymond B. Bragg, Lester Mondale, John Nicholls Booth, and has now reached the high point in its career as a church and as a community force under the able leadership of Dr. Homer Jack.

One of the most delicate situations that I had to deal with was in connection with the retirement of Dr. Pulsford from the First Church. Mr. Morton D. Hull, who was always generous, tolerant, and broad-minded, brought into my office $20,000 in bonds and we arranged for the Unitarian Pension Society to pay the income from these bonds, which was $1,000 a year, to a retired minister of the First Unitarian Society of Chicago. This income of $1,000 a year was considerably in excess at that time of the regular pension that the Society was paying retired ministers.

Dr. Pulsford then resigned, and I negotiated the going to the First Church of Von Ogden Vogt. I had read Dr. Vogt's book, *Art and Religion,* had used him in a meeting of the National Federation of Religious Liberals in New York City and had been greatly impressed with his general abilities and his desire to build a new church. After introducing him to the leaders of the voting members of the First Unitarian Church, I then introduced him to Mr. Hull. Mr. Hull agreed, in a telephone conversation between himself and me when he was in Washington, D. C., that if Mr. Vogt accepted the church and within two years demonstrated not the necessity but the desirability of a new church building, he would erect it. Mr. Vogt accepted the call, was installed in the church, and in the third, or at most the fourth, year of his pastorate, the new building was in process of erection at a cost of more than $500,000—thus becoming the cathedral church of the Western Area.

Under Leslie T. Pennington, who succeeded Mr.

Vogt, the Church membership and budget have both grown markedly, and the church has become a real social force in the Hyde Park Community.

After various efforts to revive Unity Church, finally Dr. Hawley died, and a new minister was installed who has only recently resigned.

Geneva had not had a minister since the time when the mind of man runneth not to the contrary until Dr. Charles H. Lyttle moved to Chicago in the late twenties. And with his eye for history, realizing that Geneva was the oldest Unitarian Church building west of the Hudson, took a special interest in it, became its minister, has revamped the building, and now continues as minister with his characteristic devotion.

Hobart, Indiana, which had not had a settled minister since the late teens now has a full-time minister and is flourishing under the leadership of Orson Moore.

The People's Liberal Church became affiliated with the Conference largely under the leadership of Dr. Charles H. Lyttle. This church later gave birth to the Beverly Unitarian Fellowship, which was housed in a castle in Beverly. Later the mother church merged with its child in what is now the Beverly Unitarian Church and which still meets in the Castle, under the able leadership of Vincent Silliman. I take special pride in the development of that particular church because it was I who negotiated with the American Unitarian Association the purchase of the Castle.

Park Forest, with John Crane as its minister, and North Shore, with Russell Bletzer as its minister, were both more recently organized under the Secretaryship of Randall S. Hilton.

One of the things in which I have always taken a very special pride was the starting of the All-Unitarian dinners under the auspices of the Chicago Associate Alliance. I have often thought of, and sometimes referred to, myself as the "mother" of the Alliance All-Unitarian dinner.

I have left the People's Church, Meadville Theological School, and Abraham Lincoln Centre to be mentioned last, though they were not chronologically last.

When I first came to Chicago I heard of a large People's Church, under the leadership of Dr. Preston Bradley, meeting in a theatre on the North Side. I made contacts with Dr. Bradley, attended his services, and negotiated his entrance into the Unitarian ministry. In those days, under the rules of the Fellowship Committee, a minister who was not pastor of a Unitarian-affiliated church within three years lost his ministerial status. Before the three years were up, the Board of Trustees of the People's Church voted to affiliate with the Western Unitarian Conference, the American Unitarian Association, and the National Federation of Religious Liberals. Thus, the People's Church became a regularly affiliated Unitarian church. It then proceeded to erect its present adequate building, with financial assistance from the American Unitarian Association, which loan has been fully and completely repaid.

The question of the removal of the Meadville Theological School from Meadville, Pennsylvania, to Chicago had been under consideration for many years. I was elected to the Board of Meadville in 1922 and was made a member of the committee to negotiate with the University of Chicago for some sort of relationship with that institution. The University had had a plan of what it called "affiliated relationships" but had decided that it did not want to expand this kind of arrangement. I then negotiated with Shailer Mathews what we called an "associated relationship" which gave Meadville all of the privileges that the other schools had without the technicalities of an affiliated arrangement.

Various commissions and committees studied the matter of removal of the school. One group favored Ann Arbor, Michigan; another, Ithaca, New York. Still another, representing the older members of the Board, favored remaining in Meadville, Pennsylvania; but those favoring the removal to Chicago were able to outmaneuver and outvote the various splinter groups, and when I appeared before the Board of Directors with a pledge from Morton D. Hull of $100,000, in case the School moved to Chicago, and moved that the School be removed to Chicago, the vote was passed practically unanimously.

Then came the problem of housing the School in Chicago. I negotiated with Dr. Phemister the purchase of the President's house for the sum of $70,000. It was on a Saturday when I got Dr. Phemister to agree to the sale. Not being a lawyer I found it somewhat difficult to draft an option that would hold water but I did so, called Morton D. Hull in Bennington, Vermont, and told him that I needed $2,000 for an option on the Phemister property. He said, "How are you going to get it?" I replied, "Your secretary tells me she has $2,000 in an account of yours on which she has the right to draw checks." He said, "Well, tell her to give it to you." I took the check and the option out to the Phemisters, got their names on the dotted line late Saturday afternoon. Monday morning, bright and early, Dr. Phemister was in the lobby of Lincoln Centre to waylay me on my way to the Conference Office at 105 S. Dearborn. He told me that he wanted to return the check and pick up the option. I told him that this was not possible. I then went to my office and soon his attorney appeared. The attorney said, "I am instructed by my client to return this check for $2,000 and pick up the option on his property." I replied that I could not accept the check. He said, "I will mail it to you." I replied, "In this case I will not accept any mail addressed to this office in the next ten days." The lawyer, who was quite a fine young gentleman, said, "That will not be necessary. I will plainly mark the envelope so that you will recognize it from your other mail. Then you can return it to me." This I did. Then the attorneys took over and the final arrangements were worked out, whereby Meadville became the possessor of what is now known as the President's House, and where Dr. Mead and his charming wife now live.

Next I negotiated the purchase of what is now known as Channing House, in the course of which I also ran into legal complications when a realtor claimed a fee for the sale which I, myself, had consummated. But the lawyers were able to straighten this out also.

In 1927 I was the youngest person ever to receive an honorary degree from Meadville Theological School. I served on the committee which worked out the contract for the present Federated Theological Faculties of the University of Chicago, and also on the committee which more recently revised the contract. I think, perhaps, that through the years I will be most proud of my part in the election of Dr. Sidney Mead as the President of Meadville.

Abraham Lincoln Centre grew out of All Souls Church, which was founded in 1882 by Jenkin Lloyd Jones and occupied a building across the street from where Lincoln Centre now stands.

When Dr. Jones died in 1918 the kingpin which held

All Souls Church, Abraham Lincoln Centre, and Unity Publishing Company together was missing, and when some difficulties developed both the Board of Trustees of Lincoln Centre and the Board of Trustees of All Souls Church voted to ask me to move into the parsonage at the Centre, study their problems, and make recommendations for solutions. So it was that in the spring of 1923, Mrs. Reese and I with our three children moved to Abraham Lincoln Centre, into an apartment planned in detail by Frank Lloyd Wright.

The church and the Centre came to an amicable separation of ways, and later Unity Publishing Company came under the full control of Abraham Lincoln Centre.

In 1930 Abraham Lincoln Centre, which had not before been formally affiliated with the Unitarian movement, voted to affiliate with the Western Unitarian Conference and the American Unitarian Association.

The Unitarian churches in the Greater Chicago Area have increasingly evinced an interest in the Centre and I want to urge upon all Unitarians in this vicinity to rally mightily to the support of my successor, Randall S. Hilton.

Mr. Randall S. Hilton is acquainted and in accord with the traditions of the Centre and of UNITY. He is utterly committed to the democratic and humanitarian principles for which the Centre stands. He is an experienced and able administrator. Mrs. Hilton is in her own right equally well-qualified to fit into the program and activities of the Centre.

Abraham Lincoln Centre stands for all of the advanced ideas which Unitarian and Universalist churches have proclaimed for generations, and it is not, I think, too much to expect that Unitarians and Universalists in the Chicago area will rally to the support of the Centre to a greater extent than heretofore.

When I came to Lincoln Centre I had one basic motivation: that was to put into practical operation the liberal and democratic principles for which I had long stood. During my years here I have never thought of my activities as being limited to the four walls of this building. I have served as President of the Chicago Federation of Settlements, of the Chicago Adult Education Council, of the Friends of Chicago Public Library, of the Western Unitarian Conference, and Vice-President of the Chicago Urban League. I have also served on innumerable committees, boards, and commissions in the fields of social welfare and liberal religion—and all of these have been rich and rewarding experiences.

I have never once attempted to set myself up as a leader of the Negro people. I have always chosen, rather, to think of myself as a servant of the Negro people. Leading Negroes of Chicago have all received me with open arms and warm hearts.

There have been many forward steps in race relations in the last twenty-five years, but fifty-two years ago when Abraham Lincoln Centre was founded it was very exceptional for an institution to commit itself as did the Centre to service without regard to race or color. This long service in race relations by the Centre was recognized by the Chicago Urban League when it presented a merit plaque to the Centre on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary.

While at the Centre I have written three books, edited two others, and have furnished chapters in four additional books.

To all who have cooperated with me in any way during my thirty-four years with this institution, I want to express my deep gratitude. For all of the rich and rewarding experiences that I have had in this work, I want to express my profound appreciation, and I want to wish for Abraham Lincoln Centre under its new leadership the greatest possible period of growth, development, and service.

Curtis W. Reese.

The Church As a Cooperative Ministry

ANGUS MacLEAN

Professor Richard Neibuhr, in a statement issued in connection with his recent studies in theological education, makes reference to two quite different conceptions of the ministry. One is symbolized by the figure of the good shepherd—really the old concept of the priestly office in which the priest stands between God and the people as the fountainhead of wisdom and mercy and moral rectitude, and mediates the power and meaning of the faith to each and every one of his flock. The second is that of guide and director of a community, the members of which minister to each other—a community in which each can be minister and priest to himself and his neighbor. This latter concept comes much closer to the experiences and practices of liberal churches than does the former. Early Protestantism brought forth the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers, but I doubt if Luther and his friends ever realized the nature of the great victory that he had won, and so they sold out for a mess of rigid doctrines. Not being theologically prepared to accept the results of the general exercise of freedom of conscience rigidity remained to plague and divide the church. Even the liberal churches of our day are making heavy weather of it in this matter of accepting the fruits of freedom, being buffeted as they sail by the contrary winds of tradition and modernity, and rocked by the angry seas of fixity and fluidity of doctrine.

My intention is to explore the implications of this idea of the church as a mutual ministry. Our homiletics professor at St. Lawrence characterizes a certain type of sermon as the Magellan type—the sort that goes around the world. What I do may appear to be this sort of thing, for there is much involved in this notion of the church.

My idea of the church, which I am sure many of you share in some measure, is based on what seems to be the natural way in which people acquire goodness and wisdom and give of these to each other. If there is any significant truth in it, that truth will be evident, and I shall not need to argue for it. I shall simply

attempt to describe it.

No one can be always spiritually robust, and everyone is at times one of the helpless little ones whose life and happiness are in the hands of his neighbors. This is a basic fact. Even the best of ministers must be ministered unto at times, and often by members of his so-called flock. Today you are vigorous, hopeful, wise, and can give another the helping hand, the wisdom, the assurance, or the pat on the back he needs. Tomorrow you are the victim of circumstances that have all but broken you, and you turn to the chap you helped but yesterday. In terms of justice or logic you may have no claim at all on the other. Life has to come to you unmerited perhaps from a neighbor's hand. Personally, I confess, that if it had not been for some neighbors at times I would not even be alive today, and that my sanity would have been more than once seriously endangered. One who has not been completely dependent upon another's good will has still something to learn. The most gifted and secure will find himself at times the victim of misfortune, and he may find the one he regarded as least worthy the first to be at his door wanting to know what he can do. This is life. Today I am well, and the sick are glad to have me visit them, tomorrow I look out upon the world through the eyes of the sufferer. Today I comfort the bereaved and tomorrow he helps me through a similar crisis. Today I am young and tomorrow I am old and struggling to adjust to the fact. Today I may be virtuous and tempted to look condescendingly at the evildoer, and tomorrow I may have done that which appalls me and I need understanding, and forgiveness, at least the respect due to another human. And this is not merely so in times of crisis. Every day and every hour we are sustained by others' reactions to us, or destroyed thereby. We give life to others, and we take it away. We blossom in the company of some, and wither in the company of others. Some are expert dealers in life, and some experts in destroying it. Even a smile or any salutation on the street gives a tone of vitality to our next few steps, and the opposite, e.g., a slight from someone from whom we expected more, will disturb even the functioning of glands and the circulatory system. A church community should be most alert to this fact, that the power of life and death is in our hands, and as an agency of life conduct itself accordingly. In this fact we have the justification for the institution of the church and its hope of redemptive service.

This is the ministry that I like to think of as having to do with the worth of persons. Sick or old or morally at fault, we need those who will still grant us the status of worth as persons. Dogmatic and arrogant, timid and uncertain, we need the same. We are lost unless someone gives us this gift of life. This is what gave power to the great souls of earth, redemptive power. The Christian gospel story points dramatically to this as the great genius of Jesus—the ability to bestow the gift of worth, of life, upon those who were, in their own or others' eyes, worthless. This is what at the lower end of the scale brings you friends, and at the other may give one the status of a God. This fact of our redemptive power should be basic to our understanding of the church, it should underlie all our teaching procedures with all people young and old, it should give meaning to the corporate expression of our concern for people throughout the world, it should be the inspiration of our administrative procedures. We have made some progress in the implementation of this idea in our work with children, but we have a long way to go to make the church a place generally acknowledged as one in which it is easy to live, to grow, to be productive of life.

The church fellowship should make it easier for us to build for ourselves an effective theology or philosophy of life. Psychologists and psychiatrists, now turned philosophers and theologians, advise us that we need a "framework of reference and devotion," and that this is necessary not only to lead a noble life, but to remain sane. A philosophy or theology may therefore be a matter of life and death to us. If we cannot accept the ancient command to love the Lord and our neighbor as ourselves, we need its spiritual equivalent. Now as to how this is best acquired. There is a germ of realism in the liberal notion that we must need to work out our philosophies for ourselves, that we must put the stamp of our own personalities upon the faith of our fathers. Religion is something like a hat. No matter how well made or how expert the salesman who places it on your head, it is not comfortable until you adjust it yourself. Gordon Allport in his *"The Individual and His Religion"* gives eloquent articulation to this fact, that all religiously inclined souls *do* modify what they receive from their cultures. All great religious leaders declare the fact most loudly.

The quest of truth is a tricky business, and success in it is far from being a purely intellectual enterprise as we shall see later. The purely intellectual approach, which I doubt is ever employed, would lead the seeker to come "out the selfsame door he entered in." The truth is tricky, as Pogo says. Like "standing with feet buttered on a pool of ball bearings . . . one man's truth is another man's cold broccoli." Nevertheless there is a necessity, indeed a compulsion, for the quest. As liberals we make much of this necessity to think for ourselves, and of man's capacity to handle his problems, but liberals often go wrong on the notion of independence, to the extent that they overlook their dependence on both tradition and their neighbors.

There is a warp of common values and clues to wise living in the loom of history upon which we are privileged to weave what patterns we may and as circumstances demand, threads of wisdom on which not only you but old Amos and Jesus and Laotse, as well as humble folk of every culture, work original designs. I could be specific here and would be if I did not think that liberals know and acknowledge what I have in mind. We are terribly dependent upon the searchers for knowledge of our day and of days past. I confess a great debt to Freud, Darwin, Jesus, Shakespeare, the Hebrew prophets, John Dewey, Walter Rauschenbusch, Socrates, et al., and a host of biologists, astronomers, educators, and even children. All gave me a helping hand in finding a framework of fact and hypothesis with which to make sense of the universe, to give meaning to human life, and to indicate how I should behave. But I should have gotten little from them if the creative capacity of my own mind and spirit had not been active, if the stream of human life had not been directed into the lesser stream of my own experience, if my soul had not exercised its inborn right to explore and taste and evaluate. It is an open pattern with me, something like a divine doodling in which I can relate the threads of my own life to those of others *ad infinitum*. Without this I could not function as a human, and without it I would certainly be a nonentity as a religionist. But more pertinent to my theme is this fact, that in this

reprocessing of what comes to us from experience and culture we are most dependent upon neighbors and friends, teachers, bull sessions, and upon circumstances and occasions that make wisdom both necessary and available to us. This general picture makes the one way traffic in ideas on Sunday morning, valuable as it certainly is, rather inadequate. Growth occurs in fellowship. I do not need to spell this out in terms of program and equipment, but I do feel the need of saying that the recognition of the way we grow underlies far too little of our program structuring.

In the building of instruments of understanding and adjustment we have to go beyond facts, beyond demonstrable knowledge. Here I may not carry the logical positivists or empirical positivists. What man cannot sense physically or encompass rationally, he nevertheless explores. His soul is not happy in a universe that yields no meaning. We have only to look at old maps of the world, which were done when so little of the earth was known, to establish this as a natural human tendency, and if we were to look into our own souls we would find that we ride in many areas on the wings of fancy and poesy and imagination. Our reach exceeds our grasp. And let me say that our use of the imaginative, the poetic, and the symbolic needs the discipline of knowledge and understanding, too, for there are those who make a vice of the speculative, the imaginative, and the symbolic. Through contact with sun and moon and weather, earth's creatures and life's processes and mysteries, we construct patterns of feeling and thought which should be under the discipline of knowledge, but which are just as essential as fact and more directly related to reasoning than many would care to admit. Thus our knowledge is crowned and made useful, and we feel at home in the universe of which we know so very little. In this process of emotional and intellectual accommodation, the memory of a person, a chance remark, a simple insight-producing incident may be much more productive than the labored and unanswerable arguments of the intellectual giants. I am not saying that this should be so, but simply that it is so. This is the way we are. This is the way we go astray or find our way. The value of what happens depends upon the circumstances and the wisdom that surrounds us. It would seem reasonable to suppose that our greatest guidance in the quest comes from shared experience in a setting of intellectual integrity and of devotion to the good and the beautiful and the true. Can the church create this setting?

In the Beacon curriculum for church schools much of this wisdom is recognized, but there seems to be little that is more difficult for the uninitiated to appreciate. This curriculum has been contemptuously referred to by even liberals of some quality as "the birds and bees curriculum." The free and untrammeled exploration of life in quest of its richest meaning and value should commend itself easily, but it does not. Spiritual Indian medicine is a close competitor. The cure for this unhappy situation is not for one group to sell its ideas to others, nor is it in surrender to objectors, nor is it to be found in the outcome of pitched battles which so often threaten us on the local level. It is in the dedicated renewal of the search for faith and procedures which is the responsibility of every generation. The curriculum under discussion is the product of efforts made by many people on both the local and national level, and continues to be made and modified by people from the individual teacher to the editor-in-chief. I mention it as a sample of the cooperative efforts in which we must engage. We work out our problems together. I cannot imagine any other procedure having the chance of the proverbial snowball amongst us. So I return to my inclusive theme, the involvement of us all, under discipline, in the acquisition of wisdom. We are in this together. I recognize fully the place of the genius, saint, and explorer, and even of the prophet who comes from his wilderness with his "Thus saith—" and leaves others to take the consequences. Given their full place, what I have said still stands.

I cannot leave this subject alone without giving some special attention to the field of ethical values. This is an area in which we most of all need each other, for our greatest need is not to find commendable ethical theories, but a process by which values are created and become a way of life. This is the area in which we are most backward, most frail, and in which we most frequently delude ourselves.

We cannot acquire values merely by intellectual effort. We have to experience them in our relations to humans. I find that the most difficult thing for students of religious education to understand is that they must provide living situations in which the values they seek to communicate are operating to a significant degree before they have a chance of success. Human relations, disciplined by life-giving values, must be promoted on every age level in a selected environment. Then one can go about the development of meaning and articulation that broaden and deepen the experience of value. I think of the total church as a place where such a theatre of life can be provided, in which people can pursue purposes, promote causes, and attack problems under the discipline of the highest and best they know. I am discouraged at this point by the memory of faction-ridden and quarreling churches out of which no such life-giving values can come, but I am encouraged by other churches in which I have seen something of what I hope of the church generally. My hope is that we can set up procedures that may lessen the gap between what we acclaim as good and that by which we actually live. Religion has always involved disciplined commitment, and liberal religion is not different in this respect. The faith we declare as liberals is a complex of rather terrifying ideals—respect for persons, thinking for ourselves, to follow where truth leads us, etc. And this good that we acclaim has a command in it, as every challenging religion must have. We have escaped the commands of kings, popes, and potentates, and of ancient creeds, but we cannot escape this one. Our professed values command us to change our ways, to improve ourselves. Unfortunately there is a natural reluctance to changing our ways, but change them we must, for where growth fails death takes over. I find here and there a wistful wondering about the religiousness of our liberal faith. There may be some occasion for this wondering, and if there is I suspect it is in this matter of failing to realize adequately that in acclaiming a great belief we put ourselves under the authority of that belief. This is as true of what I find to believe for myself as of any transmitted ideology. And here our togetherness is indispensable. What a bulwark a church could be! Martyrs are rare, and in any case they have accomplished far less than the twos and threes, here and there, who found God in their togetherness.

I would also point out here the relation our commitment to acclaimed value has to our theologies and

philosophies. It seems to me to be a law of life that when we too greatly compromise our professed principles our philosophies go awry. Life loses the meanings we do not live, and then we become worried and cynical and probably end up with a rather dim view of life. When you pick up the tragedy of Macbeth and live with him in his preliminary contact with the witches, you know at once that the man's integrity is involved, that the whole play hinges on whether or not he is true to what he knows as good. When flattered by the title of Thane of Cawder, or of King who yet shall be, you know what the end is to be. The destructive process goes on until he murders his king, his guest, and his kinsman, three acts abhorrent to his conscience. But seeing him driven by ambition so, we know and hear in the first act the final tragic soliloquy:

> Life is a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more; it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.

I venture to say that mind and heart are joined and that much of our ideological befuddlement roots in fine brave words that we do not adequately accept as discipline. So in addition to knowing, indeed, in order to know in the broad sense of that word, we must have a discipline of life. This is the point at which religion becomes responsible, where it passes beyond notions, good fellowship, enjoyable discussions, and fine preachments. How do we evaluate our liberal efforts in terms of this category?

Man has traditionally sought out his fellow to find a solution for this problem. He has gathered with his fellows in the presence of his gods and called himself a miserable offender and confessed to doing that which he should not have done and leaving things undone that should have been done. Making such declarations together as well as in private discloses a will to growth and there is much in man's history to indicate capacity for growth. I am not too enamoured of the traditional techniques, but they at least suggest that the church, when functioning as such, recognizes the factor of togetherness in the process of growth, and the necessity of meeting together in terms of the best that people know, to deliberately lay themselves open to new knowledge, to the disturbing command of faith, to get a God's-eye perspective on themselves, and to will to discipline themselves accordingly. Enough has been discovered about human communication in recent years to enable us to greatly improve the techniques of the church to make the gathering of ourselves together more fruitful. I know how terribly ideal such statements as I have made must sound, but if we do not aspire to be as much as we long to know, the knowing will elude us and we shall never accomplish more than to reflect the time and social strata to which we belong. I have a great hope that we can do much more than churches have traditionally done. Our greatest minds are deeply conscious of the lag in man's spiritual development. We live in a time when great and serious scientific research concerning man's spiritual nature and hope has been launched. We now have knowledge of man far in advance of that known to even the last generation. It is not a too romantic hope, it seems to me, to hope that the church can function effectively in accelerating man's spiritual evolution.

Can we begin the conquest of human pettiness, impulsiveness, and destructiveness? Can we begin the conquest of fear, especially fear of our fellow humans, and of life itself? I believe all this is possible, more possible than was nuclear fission a few decades ago. Man's spiritual nature and needs are yielding to analysis and placing new power in our hands. And that power, like the power of the atom, is safe only in the hands of those who are devoted to and disciplined in the art of understanding, of revering, and enriching life for everybody. Groups of such people are now called for by the very process of evolution. I wish that I could say something about the kind of minister I vision for the church that needs to be, but that is another subject and another article. Suffice it to say at this time we are in one another's hands, and upon this rock of fact we can, if we will, build a great and enduring church.

What Can We Do About Population Pressure?

EDITH HANSEN

"There is no great purpose served in asking how many people the world can feed. Certainly few of us would prefer a world population of 50 billions organized like robots and reduced to a diet of algae and yeast, as opposed to a smaller population enjoying larger opportunities." This viewpoint, expressed by Frederick Osborn, executive vice-president of the Population Council, in the Council's report, published in 1956, has a strong appeal for religious liberals. We believe that people everywhere should have opportunities to make this life worthwhile. And for us, freedom of the human spirit is the supreme value. Our responsibility, therefore, to respond to the challenge of population pressure is great.

It has been of interest to me to inquire how citizens can aid the movement for voluntary population control through public education in use of healthful contraceptives. Letters received from a number of leaders in the population field contain valuable information and expressions of opinion which I wish to share. Also I wish to suggest some conclusions resulting from study of letters and bulletins.

Dr. Robert C. Cook, director of the Population Reference Bureau, in an article, "Why People Refuse to Face Population Problems," in the October, 1952, bulletin of the Population Reference Bureau, declares that recognition of problems of population pressure "can come only when people liberate themselves from the fears which shackle their minds and their actions." In a letter he expresses his conviction that the will to control conception is of major importance. "More important, it seems to me, than the *pill* is the *will*. . . . This is not to say that in underdeveloped countries with very low living levels, a cheap and simple contraceptive would not be an enormous advantage. But it will not of itself 'solve' the problem." He believes, however, that "there is a very general awakening regarding the nature of the crisis which we face today."

Dr. Frank Lorimer, administrative director of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Popula-

tion, writes:

> It is especially important, from the standpoint of general public policy, to emphasize the position that reduction of rates of population increase in areas of meager resources and high fertility can not alone meet the needs of these areas, but that this is one critical aspect of economic development. The implementation of any policy for the control of population is likely to be effective only in conjunction with other programs for economic and social development. . . . I have a strong personal conviction that the important thing is to bring such problems and related information accurately to the attention of citizens throughout the world. I have great confidence in the capacity of human beings everywhere to take enlightened action if they are able to formulate their judgments on the basis of accurate information.

Frederick Osborn, in a letter, explains viewpoints of the Population Council:

> We do not feel that Americans have a right to tell other peoples that they are over-populated and that they should apply family limitation. We are extremely conscious of the sensitivities of foreign groups, who, like ourselves assume that larger numbers of their groups would be good for themselves and the world. . . . We feel that international activities in this field bring about much happier results than a specifically American interest in cutting down the growth of non-European peoples.

Dr. Dudley Kirk, demographic director of the Council, adds:

> We have been conscious of a growing feeling among some Americans that growing populations in other countries threaten the foreign sources of raw materials on which we are increasingly dependent as a result of the rapid depletion of some of our domestic resources. Whatever the validity of this argument, it is scarcely calculated to make friends abroad.

He writes of the Council's concern about optimistic assertions that "population growth unlimited would be a kind of insurance for economic prosperity in the United States." He suggests an article rejecting this argument: "Population Threatens Prosperity," by Joseph J. Spengler (*Harvard Business Review,* Jan.-Feb., 1956).

United Nations population work is valued highly by each of these leaders. In a bulletin of the Population Reference Bureau, *Population in the United Nations,* Nov., 1955, Dr. Cook reviews the development of the Population Commission and the Population Branch and explains their work and their relationships to other organizations. The Population Commission, created by the Economic and Social Council, advises ECOSOC regarding demographic problems of member nations of the United Nations. The Population Branch is a part of the United Nations Secretariat. The Population Branch and the Statistical Office implement resolutions of the Population Commission. The Population Branch cooperates with UNESCO, WHO, FAO, and the regional economic commissions in many projects. Until recently the Population Branch was of division status in the Secretariat. For financial reasons, the Secretariat was reduced in personnel. Reduction was far greater in personnel engaged in population work than in the personnel of any other section. "The money now budgeted to the Population Branch would pay only about one-hundredth of the cost of an intercontinental bomber. With the necessity for peace more urgent every day is this economy or short-sighted penury?" asks Dr. Cook. He adds:

> The United Nations has focused world attention on population problems, and this has been a unique contribution. Most of the work it has done is of such a nature that it could be done only by an international agency. . . . It has done much to focus attention on the relationship of population trends and living conditions throughout the world.

Dr. Pascal K. Whelpton, director of the Scripps Foundation for Research in Population Problems, and, for a time, director of the Population Division, United Nations Secretariat, is "delighted" that some liberal-minded people may become interested in supporting the United Nations program in the population field. He emphasizes that the United Nations program includes many types of population problems, population pressure being one type. "It seems to me," he writes, "that the major need is for the people of the countries concerned to have a better understanding of what their population problems are and of what may be done to alleviate them." Most of the work of fact gathering and dissemination should be done by citizens within the countries.

Mr. Osborn and Dr. Kirk write of the Population Council's concern about reduction of personnel and funds for United Nations work in population. Dr. Kirk expresses his personal opinion "that the United Nations Population Branch would be well advised to include industrialized countries more prominently in its studies and I think the staff would like to do so." Mr. Osborn believes it important "to try by various means to convince the Secretary General and those determining the position of the United States delegation of the importance of United Nations work in this field."

No citizens' organization has assumed responsibility for effort for expansion of United Nations work in population. Religious liberals are uniquely fitted in attitude and appropriately organized internationally for it. Within each country where there are Unitarian, Humanist, or Ethical groups, interested members could make a well-informed, patient, continuous effort to influence their government and their United Nations Mission. Such effort would emphasize in our own and others' minds that population pressure is a world-wide problem, in which we include ourselves. We would aid world-wide understanding without offending sensitive peoples. We would help to keep population policies out of power struggles between and within countries. Religious liberals in the United States could take the initiative for the organization of such an international citizens' effort, and we could lead by beginning an effort to influence our own government and United Nations Mission.

Individual support of the Planned Parenthood movement should be encouraged by Unitarian, Humanist, Ethical, and other liberal religious leaders. Strong support of this movement would complement cooperative effort to expand United Nations population work. A simple, effective way to aid Planned Parenthood as a world movement is to subscribe to *News of Population and Birth Control,* published by the International Planned Parenthood Federation, 17 West 16 St., New York 11. This bulletin is valuable to the subscriber as a source of reliable information. Copies passed on to community leaders aid the leaven of understanding. Money saved from subscriptions is used to send copies abroad free. Information about the work of the IPPF can be obtained also from the executive secretary, Mrs. Vera Houghton, 69 Eccleston Square, London S.W. 1, England.

Another way to aid Planned Parenthood is to support the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and its local groups. Information about its broad and varied program can be obtained from headquarters at 501 Madison Ave., New York 22. Dr. William Vogt is national director. A major concern of the PPFA is providing encouragement and support for research for

a satisfactory oral contraceptive. Margaret Snyder, executive secretary, Dickinson Research Memorial, PPFA, writes of being "convinced that we have reached a point of distinct acceleration in the possibilities of our research program if the needed money can be made available." A group of experts representing all sections of the United States met in New York last June under auspices of the PPFA and the Population Council to discuss accomplished research and possible research for the future. The group agreed that "despite tremendous gaps in our knowledge there does exist a sufficient base of information to justify concerted efforts to solve the known problems in this field." At the time of the writing of this article, most of the scientists present at the conference had endorsed "the efforts of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and the Population Council to mobilize social, financial, and scientific resources in this field. . . . We pledge our own efforts in this behalf. . . . While existing techniques of birth control are effective when used properly in a highly motivated population, there is urgent need for new methods that are more widely acceptable and, at the same time, safe, cheap, and effective, even in poorly motivated groups."

Still another important way in which individuals can support the world-wide movement for voluntary population control is to join the group that supports the Population Reference Bureau or to subscribe to its bulletin. Address: 1507 M St., N.W., Washington 5, D. C. "Its main objective is to make available, in accurate, non-technical form, the essential facts upon which rational population policies must be based." It makes studies, conducts an information service, and aids the specialized education of graduate students who are interested in demography. This work with students is done in workshops, and the purpose is "to help develop that leadership which the younger generation will be called upon to give as population problems inevitably increase in momentum."

Dr. Edwin H. Wilson, in an article about Margaret Sanger in the September-October issue of the *Humanist*, suggests that "besides studying the population problem in global perspective at regional conferences and in local groups, Humanists as citizens should undertake responsible efforts at home, beginning perhaps with interviewing local public health officials to learn what is and is not being done for planned parenthood and health education in their own communities." Might Unitarians, Ethicists, Universalists, and other liberals join with the Humanists in these efforts? Might there be a liaison committee or committees acting as a link between the religious associations and the organizations devoted to population problems?

For the sake of all the world's people, we should bestir ourselves. And our own stake is high. If we want our descendants to experience the blessing of freedom of thought, we must do considerable intelligent work in the population field. A three-year-old neighbor boy helped me rake leaves one day. A friend came by, and I stopped to talk. My little neighbor worked his way in between us, and, looking up at me, advised: "You had better get busy. It is getting late." If our descendants could advise us, they might say that it is very late indeed.

A Unitarian Thrust for Our Times

ROBERT H. SCHACT

The roots of our Unitarian movement are clearly in the liberating activities generated by the Renaissance in Europe in the 15th century. In 1453, by the fall of the capitol of the Roman Empire at Constantinople into the hands of the Turks, a great number of scholars gathered there migrated into western Europe. With them they brought manuscripts containing the wisdom and teachings of many Greek, Egyptian, and other great minds of the past whose ideas and spirit were not current in Europe during the Middle Ages. As a result there began a fresh evaluation of man and life, the world and religion, which brought a whole new climate of exploratory thinking into the West. Indispensable to the magnitude of this impact was the invention of movable type about the middle of the 15th century. Books, and their ideas, could now be produced and disseminated on a wide scale. With the printing of the Bible, in particular, many men of the Christian tradition saw its contents for the first time. There could have been no Protestant Reformation without this publishing of books, and especially no Unitarian movement. Then there is another influence to record: Columbus' voyage of discovery in 1492 opened men's eyes to wholly new views of the vastness of the planet they inhabited and, in time, its place in our universe, aided by the astronomical discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo. (Copernicus: 1473-1543; and Galileo: 1564-1642.) The stage was thus set for important new thinking and developments—and they came: in architecture, government, literature, the arts, science, and religion. It is the religious development, stimulated by this renaissance in Europe, with which we are concerned.

The Protestant Reformation—which Luther did not intend as a separate church movement when he posted his subjects for debate on the door of the University of Wittenberg in 1517—was pushed forward by the great awakening of the times. Our early Unitarian movement —reaching its first organized expression in Poland and Transylvania in the 16th century—was clearly the left-wing expression of the Protestant Reformation. It thrived on the idea of a large *freedom* to search for religious truth, the primary importance of *reason* in interpreting the Bible and Christianity, and a *tolerance* for the differing individual positions of its own members, as well as those of other groups. This position was most clearly expressed in Transylvania as the Unitarian movement was being born there in the decade 1560-1570. Francis David, the Unitarian leader, wrote in a volume dedicated to the Unitarian king, Prince John Sigismund: "There is no greater piece of folly than to try to exercise power over conscience and soul, both of which are subject only to their Creator." The king himself decreed "that preachers shall be allowed to preach the Gospel everywhere, each according to his own understanding of it. If the community wish to accept such preaching, well and good; if not, they shall not be compelled, but shall be allowed to keep

the preachers they prefer. No one shall be made to suffer on account of his religion, since faith is the gift of God." These expressions of the use of freedom, reason, and tolerance, as indispensable tools for the fullest and finest development of religious living, are still our tools today. But it must always be remembered that they are *tools only.* The goal sought is the most realistic, wholesome, and dynamic faith that our tools can give us, and its most complete personal fulfilment in all our thinking and actions.

Now we shall make some sweeping generalizations to try to bring us into perspective as to where we are at present, and the thrust we are trying to achieve in our times.

It has been widely repeated—and I think quite accurately—that the Protestant Reformation introduced the concept of the "priesthood of all believers." No longer did a man require an ordained priest in order to obtain the necessities of a religious life. These he could obtain for himself. It was his individual faith in Christ and God which was of central importance. The Bible he now had in his own hands. He could read and learn the "word of God" for himself. Of course he must know and follow the "word of God" in the Bible. This was an infallible book. It was the last and final authority on what was right and wrong, orthodox or unorthodox. In later times, arose those who said that some of these earlier Protestants simply exchanged an infallible church for an infallible book. We might sum up this trend, from the Unitarian slant, by saying that whereas formerly the authoritarian church had, in a sense, stood between man and God, now an authoritarian Bible stood between man and God. At this point I think we can make best progress in arriving at an understanding of the present position of our Unitarian movement by turning to our own country and what Unitarians were thinking here about one hundred years ago, and following it to our present position.

A hundred years ago a great theological controversy was in process. In order to be a Unitarian Christian, must you believe in the miracles? Theodore Parker, in his famous sermon on *The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity,* in 1841, had said, "No." The Unitarians were hotly divided. Who was a Christian, anyway? To try to resolve this dilemma as time went on, some creedal statements were adopted by Unitarian Conferences which ruled out the freer thinking members. Those ruled out, and some of their sympathizers, promptly founded the Free Religious Association in 1867, and Emerson's name headed the list. The Western Conference championed the liberal side of this "issue in the West." Finally, at the National Conference of 1894, this controversy was resolved by the statement: "These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man . . . . and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and practical aims." This resulted in a new unity of spirit and a new surge of energy which greatly strengthened and expanded our movement.

Theologically, James Freeman Clarke's five points at the end of the last century seemed a complete and final outline of the Unitarian position: "The Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of man, the Leadership of Jesus, Salvation by Character, the Progress of Mankind onward and upward forever."

Then came World War I and the decade of the 1920s. A new theological controversy arose in our midst: Can a person be a Unitarian if he holds no definite concept of God—in short, if he is an agnostic or even an atheist? Some of us, happily, have lived to see even this controversy pass. There is now just about complete acceptance of the position that the dedicated seriousness of a person for the highest fulfilment of his own life and all life about him, is the solid, practical test as to whether a man is religious or not. His personal theological convictions must be his own and respected as such; otherwise we violate freedom of search for the truth, and freedom of conscience. Why are they so important? Without free search and conscientious conclusions, a person is denied the founding of his religious life on sincerity. There can be no spiritual growth and life unless it be founded on personal sincerity. With these principles now widely accepted, another great milestone has been passed in the onward march of the Unitarian movement.

But other things of great importance have transpired in the world about us. The notion of the automatic progress of mankind as typified by beliefs of James Freeman Clarke and others—that this is God's plan and no matter how man may frustrate it, it will go on just the same: "onward and upward forever,"—just does not jibe with our latest experiences of life. The first half of this century is probably the bloodiest and most cruel man has yet known on this planet. Two World Wars with millions of lives destroyed—worst of all by such brutal murders in cold blood on a huge scale, under Hitler and Stalin—have shocked religious liberals out of any undiscriminating, over-optimistic view of the natural goodness of man, and his inevitable progress in this world by God's, or nature's, plan alone. It was the beginning of World War I which led Schweitzer to put on paper the thoughts he had been harboring since 1899: that our civilization was actually crumbling at the roots in men's lives—in their callousness to human suffering, and a growing self-centeredness making men just ambitious materialists. Our decaying civilization could, he thought, be saved only as men came to fresh, thoughtful reflection on the importance of individual lives of spiritual sensitivity, rational wholesomeness, and deep dedication; in short: "Reverence for life." Then there is hope of saving our civilization. The rise of Karl Barth's neo-orthodoxy in Switzerland in the 1920s grew out of his alarmed frustration at the way the world was heading. Reinhold Niebuhr, in this country, out of patience with the shallow optimism and unrealistic thinking of many religious liberals, left their ranks to become the penetrating prophet of a fresh religious approach which would make men realize how deeply their own lives were bound up with evil potentialities within themselves, as well as the evil inherent in the structure of society. His penetrating paradoxes regarding the nature of evil in us and about us are hard reading, but redolent with a new spirit of careful realism which our times have desperately needed. The mighty Existentialist movement in philosophy and literature, so much better known and widely influential in Europe, is eloquent testimony to the reaction of thoughtful men to a romantic realism which saw only a fundamental harmony to all of life, and which assumed that an inherent power in the nature of things would automatically overcome evil eventually. Colin Wilson's current book, *The Outsider,* is a brilliant exposition of this Existen-

tialist influence on modern man and the challenge to answer it rationally and constructively. I bought my copy in England at the end of August and found it the eighth printing since its appearance last May! It is special meat for the Unitarian mind and spirit.

However, it is somewhat cheering to remember that even though our first half-century is as terrible as it is, it has not been without its great good. It has produced a Mussolini, a Stalin, a Hitler; but it has also produced a Schweitzer, a Kagawa, a Gandhi. It has produced two frightful wars, but it has also produced a League of Nations and now a United Nations. The ancient struggle of good with evil goes on, and man is in the midst struggling to find a constructive destiny in it. The great difference is that the stakes are higher and the requirements for success more stringent because of the extensive effects for good or evil symbolized by the human release of atomic fissure. It is in this period of attempt to cope with great evil and powerful destructive forces both in us and about us that we find ourselves today. The full outcome of our efforts lies in the future which men can never see, but toward the best fulfilment of which we would give our lives with all the intelligence and devotion we possess. This constitutes the basic problem and our basic aim as religious liberals.

In summary: As Unitarians, where do we stand now? We have met and conquered the controversy over Miracles, and of Humanist versus Theist. Any man who is of dedicated idealism is welcomed as a co-religionist in the great ends of religious living that we are freshly trying to perceive and to produce in ourselves and life about us. All of life for us is the religious life—it is the quality of reverence and thoughtfulness for every angle of helpfulness and danger, in every situation with which we deal, great or small, public or private. The goal of progress is still ours, but with clear recognition that it will not come automatically by God, but only as we—as the instruments of God, if you will—labor for it. No one else can do our share for us. We are sure that any civilization worthy the name is one based on strong, sensitive, thoughtful individuals, who by experience and by faith are convinced that only as spiritual objectives such as truth, justice, and mercy are the cornerstones of our lives, the guiding principles of all our thinking and acting, shall our nation, or any nation, truly prosper and endure. And by prosperity we scarcely mean just more money and machines! We see the business of the church as cultivating spiritual growth in every man, woman, and child to radiate into every aspect of their being and doing for their highest and happiest self-fulfilment, and through them the strengthening and ennoblement of all life.

Our churches are bodies of people gathered into the spirit of this great enterprise. With excellent tools for new and creative work in religious education with our children, with an able and dedicated group of denominational leaders, and with a new grass-roots strength arising in many local conferences and churches, we are already working with fresh energy and enthusiasm. There is hard work ahead, but it will be associated with a new happiness: for men never experience a greater happiness than when they labor for great goals of living which are once again clear and of first importance in life. As people dedicated to the thinking of truth and the living of love, guided by freedom, reason, and tolerance, in the spirit of Jesus and all great prophet souls, we face the future with a new confidence and joy. This is something of what we mean by *A Unitarian Thrust for our Times.*

Through a Layman's Eyes*

WILLARD A. SMITH

It is with great humility that I address this congregation this morning, and with a certain sense of incongruity. For of all the places where I have found myself in some forty years, or where I might in a flight of imagination vision myself being, the unthought-of place is a pulpit. It occurred to me that perhaps the most honest theme of my remarks to you might be an attempt to explain the presence here of someone so completely a layman in any technical or religious sense of that word.

Last Monday, when the church secretary called to ask for the title of my sermon in order that it might appear in the church bulletin, I disguised—I hope with skill—the fact that I had no sermon, and was in deep perplexity as to what I could possibly say that would command the respect of the members of this church, and that would be worthy of the tradition of this pulpit, occupied so long by a worthy man. Out of my subconscious—which is what I call that part of me which still functions when the rest of me is stalled—there came words about a layman, which, with the help of a friend sitting out here in front who knew no more about what I was going to say than I did, appear as the title of my remarks: Through a Layman's Eyes.

And in the course of this week, when I took time to reflect upon the serious obligation I had undertaken for this morning, it seemed I could do nothing that would better conform to the temper of Unitarianism than try to explain by what curious chain of circumstances I should stand up here. My feeling about this church is that it deserves complete honesty of thought and expression, which is one of the reasons that several years ago, with great reluctance, I joined it. I must repeat that word reluctance, in case some might mistakenly think that I had misspoken myself. I joined with reluctance, because I am an anti-clerical of long standing, allergic to churches—and I have been a very passive, a very minimum, sort of member. I joined because some of you pushed me in; because some of my friends got hold of my conscience and twisted it until I had to say "uncle"; and because I got a guilt complex about the useful and dynamic role that the First Unitarian Church and its minister play in the life of Toledo, while I watched from the outside.

And once in, things began to happen. Things like finding myself, once in a while, in church on Sunday morning. Things like finding myself up here this morning. Things like a board member of the American Humanist Association calling me some weeks ago and

*Preached in the First Unitarian Church, Toledo, Ohio, May 1956.

being Machiavellian enough to take advantage of my many weaknesses, getting hold of my Achilles heel, which in this case is my Calvinistic or Kantian moral compulsion to add my bit to a worthy cause.

So, the genesis of this anomalous situation is a double one, a curious blend of me and the First Unitarian Church. And if I may speak honestly, and strongly, I will try to make clear what that means. Let me take a personal look at this church through a layman's eyes.

Frankly, the appeal of this church to me is that it is an anti-church. It symbolizes to me the clear defiance of what I find most unpalatable about the Christian tradition and Christian history. I could throw in the Moslem and the Hebrew for good measure. This church is, to me, a pleasant and not too acid corrosive of what I resent about churches in general, now and in the past. My dislike of customary organized religion comes, as far as I can tell from where it comes, from my experience as a child and an adult in America; from the way my mind sizes up the cosmos and human life; from my study as a historian; from what I believe is my very American secular faith in the human being on his own; and from my particular view of democracy and the premises on which it is built.

As a historian, I can find little to commend in the role of the Church in Western civilization, be it Catholic or Protestant. Its greatest value, as I see it, was as the organized transmitter of certain ethical humanitarian ideals, those of charity and kindness, of brotherliness, of humility in inter-human relations. The transmission of ideals needs organization, a body of some sort to preserve them and communicate them as something significant to each generation. To a degree the Christian churches served to soften the rawness and unkindliness of European man, in the Middle Ages and in modern times. This was their official program when they talked about it. It was their accepted ideal, disregarding how far in practice their members, both priests and pastors and laymen, may have ignored that ideal. There has always been a germ in the Christian tradition of social idealism, which to my layman's mind is its greatest, and its only, value.

In the Unitarian Church the emphasis on this social ideal is attractive, the more attractive the more it approaches actual application. It is all the more attractive to me to the extent that it is divorced from the other parts of the Christian tradition which I feel have been, and are today, retrogressive and socially noxious and intellectually sterile. I refer in particular to the supernatural dogma in historical Christianity; to the doctrine of human guilt and depravity; to authoritarian attitudes toward human thought and conduct; and to the historical alliance between most organized churches and the conservative political and social institutions that they usually tended to buttress.

This church made an appeal to my mind in its rejection of the supernatural and miraculous with which the other Christian churches have so long surrounded the figure of Jesus. To denature him, when his message of human love was in itself so constructive a personal and social force, was the reverse side of the coin of man's own sense of inferiority, which to my humanist mind is a self-degradation that it is impossible to accept. It smacks too much of those other centuries when the individual was prostrate before king or conqueror or priest; when the rayah, the despised cattle of an alien religion, bent their backs and their minds before the triumphant one; when the Persian in the presence of his emperor cast himself upon his stomach; or the Chaldean chanted of his own baseness before the altar of a god, a god from whom the worshipper might induce favors if he defined the divinity in terms sufficiently exalted.

We are all aware of a thesis of modern psychology, that a sense of guilt is to be avoided, that the human personality becomes neurotic and psychically perverted when deprived of a feeling of its own value, of its own justification as a natural human phenomenon. It is a curious thing that there should have persisted into the modern era, otherwise so secular and preoccupied with the attainment of worldly human goals, this heritage from the ancient East, this oriental inferiority complex. Western man has never warmed up to it, and has diluted the Christian form of it in devious ways. When he still makes what seems a cowardly compromise with it, as I feel he does, his full potential growth to all that man can be is stunted. Or else, dishonestly, he mouths words.

You are all aware that the Greek, Hellenic, portion of what we call our Greco-Judaic culture contains none of the self-debasement of man. What is humanist in the Unitarian outlook found its first voice in the Greek, who trimmed his gods down to human measure, and chose to fashion the good life on this earth by his own estimate of himself as a man, on his own responsibility. The Greek did not yearn to be a god since he was not dissatisfied with himself as a man. He did not need to be transformed, to be cleansed, to be denatured. The gods were gods, and man was man, and the differences were slight between them. The Greek was not mature enough, save some of his philosophers, to explain with his curious mind the universe and man's unpredictable behavior without the postulation of a *deus ex machina* that worked unseen, upon occasion. But that did not relieve the human of the responsibility of shaping himself his moral codes, and pursuing to the best of his wits and his talents a manly career within the time the Fates allotted him.

This self-sufficiency and natural competence became overlaid in the early European with the welter of mystery cults, of other-worldly faiths, of supernatural revelations denying the competence of man's mind, which coalesced in the early Christian church. They were grafted on to the humanitarian ideal of Jesus, whatever else there may have been in his doctrine. It ossified, and comes down to our day in ecclesiastical forms and complicated theologies and liturgical rituals, varying only superficially in the more modern Protestant forms. In fact, the secular in me is perhaps more offended by fundamentalist or evangelical Protestant obscurantism than it is by the somewhat respectable philosophical scholasticism of the Catholic church, which makes the attempt at a rationale of the unworldly. In any case, the persistence of such forms and such dogmas in our day of faith in the mind, and in scientific methodology, and in human respect, looks to the historian like a social atavism. In this church, if church there must be, I feel at least that I am not associating with a cultural corpse; that I am not propelled by a time machine back to primitiveness; or, worse, that I am not in the midst of unsure people who are afraid or ashamed of themselves and of humanity, and run to ideas and rituals they can hardly believe, in quest of respectability or of an assurance outside their own minds and their own wills.

This does not imply that one must not accept logically the possibility of that which, for lack of another name, is called the spiritual. The human being is an intricate

thing, who cannot yet be fully understood rationally, or chemically, or biologically, or esthetically. One can, without retreating from a secular humanist position, grant the possibility of something extant, not yet discovered, something not clearly within the area that we may call biological or physical forces, that has a part in the human Gestalt, that has perchance a part in the existence and evolution of the cosmos. It is not yet possible to deny this sort of grab bag into which one puts phenomena as yet otherwise inexplicable.

But once granted, I do not see the need for obeisance before it. I do not see the value in continuing to dress it in ancient Palestinian or Arabic or Jewish or Persian or Egyptian regalia. I do not see the necessity for telling children that they are a kind of damaged goods in a kind of terrestrial pawnshop, with no repair or redemption possible by their own efforts, but only through the mercy of a loving god, who, it seems, must have put them there in the first place. These things are told to a child when he is also taught by all the rest of society that his mind must be trained to think; that he must develop moral stamina and initiative; that he must become a responsible citizen who can usefully contribute to his own and his country's and the world's welfare; that his natural and creative instincts are good and worthy of fruition. This asks a child, it asks a man, to live in two worlds. The one, which he knows really counts, he is supposed by all that is most holy to deprecate. And the one that all of his experience leads him to feel most questionable and unreal he must verbalize as being the essential.

Today even our American Congress goes through these verbal gymnastics, these forms that assert dependence on the non-human. Not too long ago the oath of allegiance to our flag was changed, by law, to include the words "under God" after "one nation" and before "indivisible." This I find objectionable not alone because it spoils the cadence of a nice line. One step further the Congress has gone, quite recently. A law is proposed whereby all coins hereafter issued must bear the words "In God we trust." I must wonder what the Congress thinks it is legislating. My first reaction was that here was a strong America, in time of distress and fear, running for cover and protection, legislating itself a sponsor to prove that it was right, and to make itself safe and respectable. It has always been very American to believe that this land of ours was made what it was by the sweat of human hands and human heads; and that it was the most modern of countries where a free and proud people, out of their own resources, built something laudable and prosperous and very humanly moral, and had purged itself of the inequalities and debasements of the European past. We tended to believe that we were what we had made ourselves. But this shifts it onto God's responsibility. This makes us not autonomous, not sovereign.

And one would suppose that this makes what we do more godly or under God's direction. This puts America, in spirit, where the organized churches have always been. Being the centers of spiritual activity, and the exponents of an ethic whose validity was that it came from the supernatural, what they did and what they supported was right. Has the Congress now legislated that God is a democrat? Under James I he was a Protestant divine rightist, and under Mussolini he was a Catholic fascist. In Anglican England under the Labor government from 1945 to 1950, he was a democratic socialist. Does this recent legislation, sponsored ardently by the Southern Democrats, mean that we are following divine guidance in leaving the white supremacist, Senator Eastland, as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee? Is the higher providence, to whom we now belong by law, in communication with John Foster Dulles on methods for repairing the breaches in the military wall built around the totalitarian Russian state? This harks back to President McKinley, who after the Spanish war of 1898 was undecided what we ought to do with the Philippines since we had beaten Spain and found the islands in our possession. He consulted with God, who told him that to move across the Pacific was our manifest destiny.

What I am saying is, obviously, gibberish. My point is that the Congress must know that what it has done is gibberish. No one who voted to change the words of some of our national rituals had the slightest intention of applying the Christian ethic to any aspect of foreign or domestic policy. They were hitching onto the supernatural for altogether different reasons. It is the hypocrisy of those reasons that I protest, and the parallel hypocrisy of much of the conduct of Christians under traditional Christian organization. I protest as well the atavism of this behavior. Every member of our government in Washington is a full-fledged secular materialist, be he right or left or center. He believes in arms or the United Nations, in public or private utilities, in national prosperity attained by some economic scheme or other, devised and activated by human beings. He has no belief in a *deus ex machina* that will solve the problem of segregation or prevent a war in the Middle East. But he does not dare say so. He even puts into words something like the opposite.

The members of this church would dare say so. They would probably even have the conscience to say to the Congress that in this nation, born and raised in secularism and religious freedom, no citizen may be required by oath to put himself under God, even though the Congress may put God on our coins. This church moves away from cant, from leaning on the supernatural. It does not parade an endorsement by a pseudo-divine edition of *Good Housekeeping*. I have come to feel that a Unitarian is, among the other churchgoers, the only one who vitalizes that Hellenic part of our civilized experience, and declares his independence from inferiority and submission and human defeatism. He accepts man as he is, respects his mind for what truth it can find, expects the individual to build, with his fellow citizens, on his own efforts whatever he conceives to be worth building. And that otherwise nothing gets built.

As I take it, it is to promote that attitude in human affairs that Unitarians have a church, rather than doing it alone as individuals. To this, as a layman, I give my grudging consent. Grudging, because to me the word church has become an unhealthy symbol. I suspect any of them of the worst. But if it takes a Unitarian ecclesiastical organization to get rid of evil traditional religious ideas and social hypocrisy, then it is probably a sound pragmatic method.

It is in this sense that I referred to our church as an anti-church. It is for this reason that I am slowly getting over the sense of guiltily giving in to the enemy, which I first felt when I began walking through those doors. That sense of guilt is being replaced by a certain satisfaction in belonging to what I conceive to be a dedicated subversive organization, subversive of cramped and foolish theologies, a champion of self-respecting humanity, disciples of the man Jesus, and protagonists of a decent and improvable human world.

Western Unitarian Conference

700 Oakwood Boulevard, Chicago 15, Illinois
RANDALL S. HILTON, Executive Secretary

BOARD MEETING

The Board of Directors of the Western Unitarian Conference met in Chicago on Monday, January 14, 1957. The following is a summary of the discussions and actions which took place.

1. Dr. Curtis Reese, the Treasurer, was unable to be present. The Secretary gave the report based on the six months' operating statement.

2. Randall Hilton, the Executive Secretary, gave his final report to the Board. He leaves the office February 15, 1957, to become Dean of Abraham Lincoln Centre. The report covered his activities since the last Board meeting. Many of the items covered have been in the News Notes. Others will be found on these pages.

3. Charles Van Dine reported on the Youth Committee, telling of the plans for the summer Youth Conference to be held at the Rockford, Illinois, Rotary Camp, the week of August 18, 1957.

4. The Secretary reported that the Committee on Fellowships had not met but would meet with the new Secretary, Ellsworth Smith, after he takes office.

5. The board *voted* to inquire of the Hospitality Committee for the May Meetings as to whether ministers of Fellowships could not be included in their plans.

6. Mr. Hilton reported that the Program Committee for the annual meetings to be held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, April 26-28, 1957, is utilizing the commission plan as it did last year. He also reported that certain features of the program had been arranged by the President of the Conference without the Secretary's knowledge. Mr. Buehrer, President, then told of plans for a special banquet honoring Dr. Reese and Randall Hilton, the retiring Treasurer and Secretary. Special speakers have been invited to pay tributes to Dr. Reese, and Randall Hilton has been asked to give the Conference sermon.

7. During the requested absence of Mr. Hilton from the room the Board voted to express their appreciation for the thirteen and a half years of service of the Secretary by a gift to him of $500. The check was presented to him at dinner.

8. Arthur Foote reported that the members of the Nominating Committee were in communication with each other and requested members of the Board, or any other interested persons, to send him suggestions for new Board members.

9. The Religious Education Committee, Mrs. Randall Hilton, Chairman, sent in her report. It included requesting the program committee of the Ministers' Institute and the Western Conference Annual Meeting to include religious education in their plans. She also reported further on plans for the religious education section of the Geneva Summer Assembly.

10. There was general discussion of the location of the Conference Office. This resulted in the authorization of the Executive Committee to negotiate with the Meadville Theological School concerning moving the Conference offices into properties owned by the school.

11. The Board adopted a budget for the year May 1, 1957, to April 30, 1958, in the amount of $23,652. It is requesting an allocation from the United Unitarian Appeal of $9,352. For the past two years the Conference has received from the Appeal only $7,500. The increase in the budget is allocated primarily to committee and field work.

12. The special committee to bring in a nomination for Treasurer, to fill the unexpired term of Dr. Reese, made its recommendation. It was accepted and the Board elected Randall Hilton as Treasurer.

13. The Board authorized the President to appoint a special committee to survey and examine the financial policies of the Conference and the Conference relationships with the United Appeal.

14. In order to facilitate the work of the special committee on fiscal policies and to remove any inhibitions that might result from the new Treasurer's previous relationship with the Conference, Mr. Hilton presented his resignation as Treasurer to be accepted if and when the Board chose to do so.

15. There was general discussion of the Development Fund Campaign contemplated by the American Unitarian Association. Several members of the Board, along with others, had met with Dr. Frederick May Eliot, President of the A.U.A., in December to consider this proposition. The Board went on record favoring the campaign and instructed the Secretary to convey this information to the American Unitarian Association and the United Unitarian Appeal along with certain suggestions the Board thought would be beneficial to its success.

Present at the meeting were E. T. Buehrer, President; Thaddeus B. Clark, Vice-President; Randall S. Hilton, Secretary; Arthur Foote, Mrs. Edgar Braun, Mrs. Christian Andreason, Lewis McGee, Clifford W. Mills, Mrs. Robert Risk, Charles W. Phillips, Addison Brown, Leslie T. Pennington (Board members), and by invitation, Ellsworth M. Smith, Secretary-Elect, and Mrs. Carl Schaad, Office Manager.

Absent Board members: Hurley Begun, Ralph Fuchs, and Curtis W. Reese.

EDWIN C. PALMER

Edwin C. Palmer, for twenty-two years minister of the People's Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan, died suddenly on December 26, 1956, in the sixty-sixth year of his life. Ed, as he was affectionately called by all who knew him, was active to the very end as he had always wished to be. He conducted services on Christmas Sunday and visited his son in Ypsilanti. On Christmas day he visited his daughter in Grand Rapids, returning home that night. He died early the following morning. He will be greatly missed not only by his parish but also by the many people who looked forward to seeing him at the Western Conference meetings and Geneva Assembly each year. Mrs. Palmer, Margaretta, is staying in Kalamazoo which is close to her children and her church family.

URBANA, ILLINOIS

The Unitarian Church of Urbana, Illinois, is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. It is at the same time contemplating a merger with the Universalist Church of Urbana.

PARENT-TEACHERS INSTITUTE

The Michigan Area Council of Liberal Churches sponsored a Parent-Teachers Institute at the Detroit Central Church, Friday and Saturday, February 1 and 2, 1957. Dr. Lucille Lindberg, Professor of Education at Queens College, New York City, and one of the Curriculum editors of the Division of Education, Council of Liberal Churches, spoke on the subject "Are We Strengthening Our Children?—The Role of Parents and Teachers in Religious Education." Workshops were conducted for the grade levels of the church school. Dr. Lindberg, Mr. David Fry, Dr. James E. Bond, and Detroit Police Commissioner, Edward S. Piggins participated in a panel discussion on "Helping the Teen-ager to Find His Place."

JAMES LUTHER ADAMS

Dr. James Luther Adams left Chicago and Meadville Theological School the first of February to take up his duties as Professor of Social Ethics at Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts. On January 13, 1957, numerous organizations in Chicago cosponsored a farewell reception for him at the Quadrangle Club of the University of Chicago. This group has also arranged for the publication of a collection of articles and essays written by Dr. Adams. Copies may be obtained for one dollar each from Rev. David H. Cole, 910 East 83rd Street, Chicago 19, Illinois.

DATES TO REMEMBER

April 24-26, 1957 — Ministers' Institute, Western Conference Branch of the Unitarian Ministers' Association, Ann Arbor, Mich.

April 26-28, 1957—Annual Meeting of the Western Unitarian Conference, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

June 30-July 6, 1957—Midwest Unitarian Summer Assembly, College Camp on Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

CHICAGO UNI-UNI DINNER

On January 18, 1957, the Chicago Area Conference of Religious Liberals sponsored a dinner held at Abraham Lincoln Centre. The dinner was presided over by Rev. Russell R. Bletzer, minister of the new North Shore Church. The speaker of the evening was Dr. Sidney Mead, President of Meadville Theological School.

QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS *

Over a six-week period the Religious Education Committee of the St. Paul church has published these questions for church school parents:

1. Have you talked with your child's church school teacher this year?
2. Are you familiar enough with the textbook or subject your child is studying in church school to discuss it with him?
3. Does your child keep his church appointments as regularly and promptly as he does other commitments he has made?
4. Do you act as though you really believe that fathers and mothers share with the church school the responsibility for the religious training of children?
5. Do you take time to do things with your child which enrich the church school experiences he is having?
6. Are the moral and ethical standards you expect from your child suitable to his age and development?

NEW MEADVILLE BOARD MEMBERS

Elected to the Board of Trustees at the Annual Meeting of the Meadville Theological School Corporation in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, were: Dr. Dale DeWitt, Regional Director of the Middle Atlantic States Unitarian Council; Dr. Ralph F. Fuchs, Executive Director of the American Association of University Professors, and Professor of Law at the University of Indiana; and Mr. Alan Sawyer, lawyer, and President of the General Convention of the Universalist Church of America.

A PERSONAL WORD

Dear Friends: I want to express to you my heartfelt thanks for your loyalty and support of the Western Unitarian Conference during my administration as your Executive Secretary and Regional Director. We have been through many problems and celebrations together. I have tried always to give you of my best and I have found all with whom I have worked to be sincerely devoted to our liberal cause. I leave this office with many happy memories and with the satisfactions far outweighing the frustrations and disappointments.

To all who have served so faithfully on Conference committees and especially to that list of persons who have been members of the Board of Directors I wish to express my sincere appreciation. Their devotion and cooperation often exceeded the call of duty.

Mrs. Hilton and I were greatly moved and strengthened by your expressions of affection and understanding during the years of our daughter's illness and at the time of her death. The kind words said and the gift presented at the last meeting of the Board warmed us greatly, too.

All in all, these past thirteen years have been a most rewarding experience. Unitarians are wonderful people.

I commend to you my successor, Ellsworth Smith, and you to him. I could wish nothing better for him than that he have as enjoyable and rich an experience as mine. Together, you and he will go on to new and better accomplishments. I will be with you doing what I can to help in these achievements.

Let me say a word about Abraham Lincoln Centre of which I am now Dean, and Mrs. Hilton, Administrative Assistant. It is a Unitarian-founded and Unitarian-affiliated institution, a social settlement serving an important community. Many of you have contributed to it. I hope that you will always keep it in mind. Its success depends upon the support and generosity of its friends. To me, it provides for all of us a practical application of our basic religious principles. I have preached liberal religious principles to you. I have administered programs for you. And now, with you, we can practice these principles in a very concrete way.

There is another avenue through which we can keep in contact. I am now also the Editor of UNITY Magazine. It is my hope that it will become increasingly useful and beneficial in the cause of liberal religion and liberalism in general. Your suggestions, contributions, and subscriptions will be appreciated. There is a need and a place for an independent liberal religious magazine. UNITY should fill this need.

Again, many thanks for permitting me to serve and work with you. May the days ahead be happy and prosperous for each of you and the Western Conference.

RANDALL S. HILTON